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Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena (RIAP) is an independent scientific research body, established in 1992 by the Kharkov-based aerospace company *Vertical* and aimed at scientific studies in the fields of non-traditional energy sources, the problem of anomalous atmospheric phenomena and the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) question.

We study:
anomalous phenomena.
We consider:
any theories.
We accept:
normal proofs,
exact references.

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PALEOVISITOLOGY: STILL AT THE CROSSROADS...

Unlike the two preceding RB issues, this one is oriented not so much towards the *history* of anomalistics as towards *historical* anomalistics.

What is a "historical anomaly"? Generally, it is any find contradicting the commonly accepted "historical picture of the world" (or the "scientific picture of the past") — such as, for example, Phoenician inscriptions in America, or the ancient wooden model of a glider found in Egypt in 1898, or the "calculating machine" of Antikythera. But more specifically, this is a historical object or piece of information about the past, whose content disagrees not only with what we are aware (or supposing to be aware) of about human history, but also, if not primarily, with our principal view of *what was possible and what was impossible* in the past. (For example, airplanes, helicopters, or nuclear weaponry could never exist on the Earth prior to the 20th century, whereas, say, hot-air balloons and hang-gliders of a sort, generally speaking, could have been built by the ancients.)

In practice, the anomalous character of a strange find (and even more so — that of "strange information" from an ancient written source) only rarely may be self-evident. Rather it emerges during the process of examination of the find or interpretation of the information of the source. On the whole, however, problems arising when we are studying "historical anomalies" are quite close to "usual" problems of a "normal" historical investigation: is the source authentic?; has it been dated correctly?; how convincingly has its original state been restored?; is the proposed interpretation of its function and construction reliable enough?; etc.

"Ideally" *any* noticeable anomaly should have been immediately "intercepted" by science and studied in laboratories and research institutes. But as a rule, nothing of this sort occurs. Why? There is no particular enigma in this situation.

The "weight" of any anomalies depends, first of all, on the attitude of specialists to them. Any serious theoretical scheme (in this case — the "scientific picture of the past") is no trifle at all: it is based on a large set of data and a lot of work and effort by historians and archaeologists has been put into it. It is no mere chance that anomalies are interesting mainly to dilettantes, whereas specialists prize established knowledge above all else.

In other words, the "inner conflict" between history and "historical anomalistics" is a sad reality (even if historians, like any other specialists, are inclined not to pay attention to "amateurs" trespassing on their ground and pointing a finger in the direction of — sometimes imaginary, sometimes real — anomalies) and it is mainly caused by the contrast of the cognitive interests of historians and anomalists.

The more rational must be the anomalistic view of history. Being much more attentive to anomalies, it should at the same time lean upon "normal" scientific knowledge about the human past, rather than flatly contradict it.

In this respect, it would be of interest and importance to understand by whom, how, and why attention has ever been paid to historical anomalies. In particular, it was, of course, paleovisitologists who became interested in them, proceeding from theoretical considerations: ancient visits from space cannot be ruled out a priori, and the traces of such visits must "by definition" be some anomalies (or "historical enigmas"). But the proponents of the conception of a "preceding civilization", first of all atlantologists, discussed many of these enigmas much earlier.

An essential contribution to the revelation of anomalies of the past was also made by the "historical ufology" of the 1950s (publications of D. Leslie, H. Wilkins, M. Jessup, et al.). It was a sort of "proto-paleovisitology" aiming at a narrower purpose — to find out if the UFO phenomenon had existed in antiquity, but anticipating at the same time some traits of the future Ancient Astronaut theory that originated some ten years later. Despite all errors, fantastic statements, and strained interpretations, rather typical for historico-ufological works, these authors did bring to light much interesting data.

Now, there exists a number of historical anomalies discovered either in the process of professional historical and archaeological studies (such as "Baghdad electric batteries", for example), or accidentally (in particular, many "unidentified fossil objects"). After discovery, they can be either forced by the specialists into the framework of "historical normalcy" (more or less in a Procrustean way), or be interpreted from the viewpoint of the "anomalistic picture of the past". The latter involves, together with scientifically-acceptable components, also some concepts that science is still denying: the hypothesis of a preceding civilization, the paleovisit hypothesis (in its "classically historical" or "historico-ufological" form), and also rather a vague idea of an extreme antiquity of man's existence on the Earth (down to the Carboniferous period, even if in an "uncivilized" state). Somewhat peripherally, there is also "creation science" which tries to reinterpret scientific knowledge in accord with belief in the literal truth of the Bible.

It is understandable that even the "extreme" version of the paleovisit hypothesis — the concept of the creation of homo sapiens and/or human civilization by extraterrestrial astronauts (not to mention "normal" paleovisits — that is "brief" re-

search expeditions to this planet) much better correlates with the scientific picture of the world and general principles of science than the creationist model. At the same time, when supposing that there existed a highly developed technological civilization on the Earth prior to recorded history, we meet with at least two difficult questions: why then are the historical anomalies so rare, and why did we inherit the ecological system of our planet in an intact state? To answer these questions, one can, of course, resort to *ad hoc* assumptions, believing, for example, that the former civilization was a strictly local and/or non-technological one—but such assumptions do seem to be *very* artificial.

On the other hand, it is hardly reasonable to deny absolutely the possibility of existence of local civilizations, more ancient than Egypt and Sumer, that perished due to some natural disasters—such as the legendary Atlantis. Atlantology had for a long time been a natural dumping-ground for information about historical anomalies; lately its popularity noticeably dropped—but not to zero. The paper "The Bimini Enigma", authored by the Swedish researcher Talbot Shaw Lindström and published in this RB issue, testifies that the search for ancient artifacts on the bed of the Atlantic Ocean is not senseless at all.

Probably, the most essential feature of historical anomalies, making them an attractive object for investigation, is their tangibility. Although, say, the existing set of UFO reports is definitely far larger, there are in it very few tangible objects. Also, the number of traces potentially available for a real study of hypothetical paleovisits exceeds considerably the number of "enigmatic radio signals" in (radio-) SETI.

The "dark side" of this situation is, however, the "objectively contradictory" position of paleovisitology that must be *at the same time* both a historical discipline and a branch of SETI. Historians are, as a rule, indifferent to extraterrestrial civilizations, and radio astronomers to the history of the terrestrial one. That is why the paleovisit idea has in practice fallen down a crack between history and SETI.

Nevertheless, being expelled from science, it did not perish, but formed its own para- (or rather pre-) scientific field of cognitive interest—namely, preastronautics, based on the Ancient Astronaut theory (AAT). Partly it may be considered as another "field of entertainment", but in this case this division is not so definite as in ufology. However skeptical is the attitude of "true scientists" to the AAT-amateurs, the latter are far less oriented towards entertainment than are their ufological counterparts. "Tabloid ufology" is, alas, a reality; "tabloid preastronautics" is virtually non-existent.

What is more, as distinct from the current situation in world ufology, paleovisitology has its own paradigm. It originated in the late 1950s—early 1960s, when Dr. Matest Agrest, an eminent mathematician and participant of the Soviet Nuclear Project, put forward his hypothesis about past contacts with extraterrestrials, basing his arguments mainly on Biblical texts. Some special details of this story are revealed in Dr. Agrest's paper "On the Development of the Idea of Paleocontacts in the USSR at the Beginning of the 1960s" published in this RB issue. In particular, it turns out that Academician Igor Kurchatov, an outstanding Soviet physicist and the Head of the Nuclear Project, was going to recommend Dr. Agrest's work for publication in the *Reports of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR*. If this plan had been accomplished, this work might have played a part similar to that of the famous paper by G. Cocconi and P. Morrison that laid the foundation of the whole SETI field. Unfortunately, the reality proved to be different.

Nevertheless, even having been published in the geographical yearbook *Na Sushe i na More*, Dr. Agrest's paper "The Cosmonauts of Yore" *did* lay the groundwork for the paleovisitological paradigm (in the "classical" sense of this term—as a model for posing and solving the research tasks): trying to find evidence of paleovisits and paleocontacts, we should look for historical enigmas, traces of "anomalously advanced" knowledge and technologies of the ancients, as well as for information (textual and pictorial) about "extraterrestrial astronauts".

Of course, the history of anomalistic studies is significant, but their further progress is even more important. In the current RB issue the historical aspect of paleovisitology (the paper by Dr. Agrest) meets with its "futurological" aspect. I mean here the paper "Search for Paleovisit Traces: General Principles and Some Problems", authored by Dr. Yuriy Morozov. It is directed to those professionals who understand that the paleovisit problem is serious, meaningful and truly important for science, being at the same time embarrassed both by the futility of some arguments of the Ancient Astronaut theory proponents, and by their opponents' accusations of the sharp discrepancy between this theory and the standards of scientific research. Dr. Morozov convincingly demonstrates that paleovisitological investigation may be conducted on quite rational and strictly scientific foundations. The only objection I could raise in this connection is that science itself is in reality not so rational—but it seems that Dr. Morozov is not ignorant of this fact (see his replies to RB questions on p. 13). But I would like to repeat again what I wrote more than once in former RB issues: where science diverges in its practice from its own ideal of objective cognition, we anomalists must maintain this ideal in our own work.

— Vladimir V. Rubtsov

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF PALEOCONTACTS IN THE USSR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1960s

Matest M. Agrest

In June of 1959 I read in the journal *Scientific American* an article about the plan developed by American scientists and engineers to launch a series of rockets filled with thin needles. By exploding the rockets high above the surface of the Earth it was supposed to create a layer of needles moving round the Earth at a great speed. This layer could be used as a kind of defense shield from ballistic rockets carrying nuclear warheads. When crossing the layer the rockets would have exploded at high altitude.

While reading this paper I thought of my Ph.D. thesis devoted to the study of the motion of a particle of matter in the gravitational field of Saturn and the system of rings surrounding the planet. Saturn's rings are located in the plane of its equator, being rather wide (the width of all the three rings is about 60 000 km) and very thin compared with their width. At that time the thickness of the rings was thought to be less than ten, or even five, kilometers.

All at once, a fantastic idea occurred to me: could the rings of Saturn be a shield to divide Saturnians living in the northern part of the planet from those living in the southern part?

My fantasy proceeded from the assumption that in different parts of Saturn there could have existed different social systems. Say, in the northern hemisphere there remained the capitalist system, and in the southern hemisphere the socialist one. Just as it is now planned on the Earth, scientists of the northern hemisphere created a protective layer consisting of small-sized material particles, which still rotate in the plane of equator at a high speed in a sufficiently wide layer. That was certainly long ago, but now socialism is victorious in both Saturnian hemispheres. But the protective rings created in time immemorial still remain an indestructible monument testifying that social differences are possible even at a high level of technology. (In 1959 it was the only allowable form of science fiction in the USSR.)

These fantastic, half-joking thoughts crystallized inside me into a deep conviction that the intelligent life on the Earth cannot be a unique phenomenon in the Universe. It is impossible to imagine anything material to be unique in the world, there can be only one immaterial essence, unique for the Universe. This is God! Even the very notion of Unity is quite different from all other numbers. The well-known mathematician and philosopher Georg Kantor put forward the following profound idea: "Unity was created by God himself, Who is unique, while all other numbers are creations of the human mind!"

Our generation witnesses rapid progress of terrestrial civilization. Soviet *sputniks* became the first steps to manned space flight. In 1959 even interplanetary voyages seemed quite possible and feasible in the near future.

There remained only one question that prevented me from believing in the reality of extraterrestrial civilizations. If there exist in the Universe other civilizations, then a great many of them will certainly be much older and therefore much more developed that our terrestrial civilization. Why do not messengers of such civilizations visit our planet?

Sixteen years later, in 1975, this question was raised by the British scientist Michael Hart. He understood the importance of the question and called it a "cardinal" one. Postulating that there are on the Earth no indications of such visits, M. Hart came to the conclusion that our civilization is the only one in the Universe. Due to Hart's paper, in 1975 many scientists radically changed their views on the problem of extraterrestrial intelligence. As for me, I in principle could not accept such a solution of the "cardinal" question even in 1959.

During one night I replaced this "cardinal" question with another one. Is it in fact true that there are no indications of the stay of ET representatives on the Earth in its history?

I remembered vividly the verse from the sixth chapter of Genesis which had excited me since my childhood when my father taught me the Bible: "The Nephilim were on earth in those days..." (Genesis, 6:4) My father translated the word "Nephilim" into Yiddish with the Russian expression "the fallen ones" ("Nephilim" has the root "Nphl"—meaning "to fall").

In most modern translations of the Bible, not only English, the word "Nephilim" is translated as "giants" and we read: "Giants were on earth in those days". But in my memory there have remained closer to me my father's commentaries based on the Kabbalistic glossary to this verse. Moreover, soon after that I found this sentence in one of the most ancient translations of the Bible into the Aramaic language—*Torgum Ankelessa.* It says: "The Nephilim, fallen onto the Earth, were on the Earth in those days". (For details see my article "The Historical Evidence of Paleocontacts"—*Ancient Skies,* 1994, Vol. 20, No. 6.)

The same night I also remembered the well-known legend about the ascension of Enoch. In the Book of Genesis (chapter 5, verse 24) it is given in the laconic words: "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, for God took him."

Later, in 1965, I was given permission to read the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* in the Moscow Lenin

Library. The *Book of Enoch* is mentioned in many ancient sources, for example, the Apostle Judas quotes it as a prophetical book. But later on, the book was lost and only in 1773 did the English scientist J. Bruce find a manuscript of this book, written in the Ethiopian language, in a tomb in Ethiopia. The find was a great sensation of the 18th century. It says in chapter 6 (verses 1–7):

"1. And it came to pass that after the sons of men multiplied in those days (the days of Jared, the father of Enoch)...

2. And the angels, the sons of heaven, saw them...

<...>

5. ...There were two hundred of them in all.

6. And they descended on Ardis which is the top of the mountain Hermon (the spur of Anti-Lebanon mountain).

7. And here are the names of their superiors (twenty names are given)."

That night I opened the Book of Genesis at chapter 19 describing the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Any modern reader will be impressed with the laconic description of the event which is very similar to the picture of a nuclear explosion.[1]

Staying up all night, I read all the chapters of Genesis and the corresponding pages of the book *Zohar* (The Shining), which is the bible of the mystic teaching of Kabbalah. The teaching was spread from mouth to mouth from a teacher to his best disciple beginning, as the Kabbalists believe, since the time of Moses, that is since the 14th century BC. (The book *Zohar* itself was made widely known in Aramaic only in the 12th century AD by Moses De Leon.)

By morning I worked out my own hypothesis about a visit of ET messengers to the Earth in ancient times. I felt the necessity to tell somebody about it.

But it was the year 1959 and I lived in the USSR! Was it possible even to utter the word "The Bible" among scientists? Was it possible to tell about ancient astronauts? A year later the edge of criticism was directed against my references to the Bible and two years later I was accused of belittling Soviet science. Asserting that it was Enoch, and not Yuri Gagarin, who was the first man to fly into outer space, I was betraying my Motherland!...

At the beginning of July 1959 I went, with my typed manuscript, to the chief of the propaganda department of the Abkhazian Regional Party Committee, Comrade M. Khvartskiya, to ask him for advice.

It is natural to assume that ET representatives left something material after their stay on the Earth besides astronomical records in ancient manuscripts which have reached us, or oral myths and legends about messengers from other worlds. It is also natural to assume that space visitors may have erected Cyclopean monuments which would amaze us humans for many generations. In this connection, the Baalbek terrace with its famous Trilithon was mentioned in the article.

Besides, the very approach of a spaceship to the Earth may have left some distinctive traces on its surface. For example, there may have appeared molten formations in the area of the landing. Mysterious tektites (or at least some of them) could be such formations. All this was given in the text handed to M. Khvartskiya.

Three days later he returned my manuscript to me and said that he had read it with great interest, that I had broached an exciting scientific problem and, what was the most important, that he allowed me to make a report on this subject at an open scientific workshop.

In July 1959 I made my report at a scientific workshop of the Sukhumi Institute of Physics and Technology (SIPT). The conference hall was overcrowded. I was speaking for more than an hour and the silence was complete. I could hear my own voice. Texts from the Bible and the book of *Zohar* were being read! I did not know what the audience was thinking about at that time. Trying to protect myself from any negative consequences, I was speaking with a smile on my face. If there had been any aggressive outbursts, I would have said: "It was just a joke!"

When I finished reading my report with the words "thank you for your attention", the audience burst with applause, violating every tradition of scientific workshops. That moment I almost lost control of myself and my whole body began to tremble.

My idea of a paleocontact with extraterrestrial cosmonauts was welcomed by the whole audience. What is more, one of the leading scientific workers of our institute, R. Y. Kucherov, took me aside and said: "You know, Matest Mendelevich, such ideas came to my mind too."

It does seem that thoughts about possible contacts with other civilizations were then gaining currency. That day, the idea that inhabitants of other planets had visited the Earth was presented to the scientific community of SIPT.

Immediately after the lecture, I rang M. Khvartskiya, told him about my report, as well as about the reaction of the audience to it, and thanked him for giving me permission to speak at the meeting. Judging from M. Khvartskiya's tone, I felt that he was also pleased. He seemed to be somewhat alarmed by his own brave decision. Well, all of us were in those days "in the hand of God". I understood him well, for there remained then more than a quarter of a century before the beginning of the era of new thinking in the USSR.

There appeared several true adherents of the idea of paleocontacts in Sukhumi. The most bright of them was G. A. Adamyan—a gifted engineer, a well-educated and intellectual man.

Now, naturally enough, I planned to publish

my report in some scientific periodical. My manuscript was submitted to the academic journal *Priroda* (Nature) by Dr. David Albertovich Frank-Kamenetsky, one of the leading physicists of the Soviet Union. But the head of the journal's ideology department D. M. Troshin considered my paper to be too bold.

Meanwhile, the content of the paper was passed from mouth to mouth and soon the rumors reached the Head of the Soviet nuclear project Dr. Igor V. Kurchatov. He proposed that I submit a synopsis of my paper for publication in the leading academical journal *Reports of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR*. The same offer was made to me by D. A. Frank-Kamenetsky. As a matter of course, I responded to these proposals with great enthusiasm.

To facilitate my work on the article, D. A. Frank-Kamenetsky asked a typist of his department to make several copies of it. At first the typist was retyping the text quite automatically, as was her habit, not paying any attention to its contents. But when she proceeded to the second page she felt that she was typing something unusual. Then she inserted into the typewriter a few additional sheets of thin paper to make extra copies. And soon the contents of article proved to be well known in Moscow—which samizdat was strictly prohibited in the USSR in those years.

In the middle of December 1959, when in Moscow, I met with V. N. Bolkhovitinov, who was then the editor-in-chief of *Yuniy Tekhnik* (The Young Technologist), a popular-science journal, and was at the same time connected with the editorial board of *Priroda*. He told me that my article had spread through the city illegally, and it was inadmissible. I replied that although I had in fact written an article about possible past contacts with extraterrestrials, I could not answer for all the copies, as the copyists could have added to them anything they would have liked. In order to put an end to it, I continued, you should publish the original text of my article. Bolkhovitinov declined my proposal, but suggested writing a new article specially for *Yuniy Tekhnik*. To make this task easier, he promised to ask two of his colleagues to help me.

As I hoped for the publication of a shortened version of my paper in the *Reports of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR* I agreed with V. N. Bolkhovitinov's idea. On December 28, 1959 I met with Mikhail Chernenko and Valentin Rich—engineers by education and gifted science journalists, who were to help me in writing the article for *Yuniy Tekhnik*. We quickly made contact, and discussed in detail what kind of article it should be. Next day I left for Sukhumi.

Soon there happened, however, a great misfortune: Soviet science suffered a great loss. On January 7, 1960, Academician I. V. Kurchatov passed away prematurely. A delegation from SIPT, including myself, was formed to take part in the funeral ceremony.

In the evening just before leaving for Moscow I heard a phone ring. These were my new friends from *Yuniy Tekhnik* journal. They phoned from Moscow. In an excited voice Mikhail Chernenko said that V. N. Bolkhovitinov was urgently asking me to give my consent to the publication of my hypothesis in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (Literary Gazette, *LG*). "But we were going to publish it in *Yuniy Tekhnik*, weren't we?"—I said. "It will take time, but now it's necessary to publish it in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. We will explain everything to you a little later,"—replied Chernenko.

I thought: "Academician Kurchatov has passed away, so there is a very little chance of publishing my article in the *Reports of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR*." "All right, do publish it in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*!"—said I at the end of our phone talk. A few hours later I left for Moscow myself.

On February 8, 1960 there was held a meeting of the editorial board of *LG*, where my article was discussed. Although I had an invitation to the meeting, it so happened that I came somewhat late. The members of the editorial board were about to leave. They had decided to publish the article in the next issue of *LG*, on the 9th of February.

I returned to the Peking Hotel rather excited. Late at night Mikhail and Valentin stormed into my room. They brought with them a copy of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* dated February 9 and still smelling of printer's ink. On the second page there was an article entitled "Does the Trail Lead Into Space?" signed by M. Chernenko and V. Rich. The introduction to the article was written by the well-known science writer Daniil Danin. Having read the article, I expressed my complete satisfaction and we congratulated each other with the success.

And only that night was I told secretly why it had been necessary to publish the small article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* so urgently, before publishing a more detailed paper in the magazine *Yuniy Tekhnik*. It turned out that reporter S. had brought to the editor of *LG* an article that in fact was a copy of my paper, which was not yet published but already known in Moscow. V. N. Bolkhovitinov, who was also the head of the science section of *LG*, had learnt about it and naturally decided to interfere. It would be possible to postpone publishing the article by reporter S. But knowing the reporter well, Bolkhovitinov feared that he might offer the pirated article to another periodical. In this case it could have appeared in print before my paper would have been published in *Yuniy Tekhnik*. This situation had to be avoided. That was why it was decided to delay the publication of reporter S.'s article while not formally rejecting it. Meanwhile, before publishing the work of the

real author in *Yuniy Tekhnik*, its summary would be presented in *LG*, thus protecting my copyright.

In spite of the subdued tone of the published article and the often repeated question "Could it happen in such a way?", its contents spread like lightning. In the evening of the same day (February 9, 1960) the leading radio stations of the world broadcast Agrest's hypothesis. The next day (February 10), a lot of newspapers in Europe and America reprinted the article.

A great many people accepted the hypothesis and the present author received a lot of letters both from inside the country and from abroad. There also came invitations to give lectures on the subject. For example, there was an invitation from the Sternberg State Astronomical Institute to meet with its young scientists. As a novel explanation of the origin of the Baalbek terrace was suggested in the article, the author was invited to participate in the international festival in Baalbek in 1960.

On October 19, 1960, quite unexpectedly not only for me, there appeared in the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (*KP*) an article that sharply criticized both the hypothesis and its author. The article was entitled "The Trail Leads into Ignorance", being signed by engineers V. Gubarev and M. Rostarchuk.

My comments on biblical texts especially enraged the authors of the article. "Historians have determined," they wrote, "that the Bible is a collection of chronicles, ancient laws, superstitions, myths and legends... The sacred book has already been deeply studied and there are no grounds to reinterpret its contents as Agrest is doing." Further Gubarev and Rostarchuk wrote: "Agrest's hypothesis is harmful also because it is diverting our youth's interests from the unsolved problems of modern science, from the secrets of Nature".

The prestige of *Literaturnaya Gazeta* suffered because of the article. How can a respected newspaper advocate on its pages ignorance and a "harmful hypothesis" that was condemned in a special resolution of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR?! Therefore *LG* reacted to the article "The Trail Leads Into Ignorance" by publishing, on December 8, another article—"Where Does the Trail Really Lead?" It said: "Trying to knock out M. Agrest, Gubarev and Rostarchuk deliver a series of powerful blows. Here is one of the hardest hits: "The Academy of Sciences has passed a special resolution about the harmfulness of Agrest's hypothesis as an antiscientific one". But we received the following answer from the Secretary of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Academician E. K. Fedorov: "Neither the Presidium, nor any other office of the Academy have ever discussed the hypothesis of physicist and mathematician Dr. Agrest, and no resolution about its harmfulness has been passed"."

Literaturnaya Gazeta continues: "Another blow. This is what the well-known Egyptologist Professor V. V. Pavlov said, according to *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: "Only a man utterly ignorant in the fields of engineering and history could have cooked up such an absurd idea as Agrest's "hypothesis"." This is checked in the same way. Professor V. V. Pavlov is astonished: "I am not acquainted with Agrest's publications and I have never reviewed them."" *Literaturnaya Gazeta* also examined and refuted other arguments against my hypothesis presented in the article by Gubarev and Rostarchuk.

This publication in *LG* was naturally expected by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and the next day (December 9, 1960) they issued their own counter-publication—"But Where Has the Trail Led Us?" which again spoke of the "harmfulness of Agrest's hypothesis". This time the word "hypothesis" was printed, however, without inverted commas.

The period when *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were hotly arguing about the articles "Does the Trail Lead Into Space?" and "The Trail Leads into Ignorance" was for me rather nerve-wracking. No doubt the article "The Trail Leads into Ignorance" had its negative effect. In particular, the official invitation to the Sternberg State Astronomical Institute for the discussion with the young astronomers was temporarily withdrawn. This meeting took place only in November 1960 at the insistence of the young scientists. There was a large number of people in the conference room, quite a few well-known scientists among them.

Immediately after my lecture there stood up a middle-aged man and asked: "Has Comrade Agrest got permission of the Party Committee of the Institute to organize this meeting?" The chairman answered in the affirmative, but at this moment from the other side of the conference hall there came a counter-question: "Why was it necessary to get permission?" Then the man said: "I think you know the attitude of the Party and the Government to Agrest's hypothesis, don't you?"

— And where was it expressed, this attitude?—somebody asked.

— Haven't you read the article "The Trail Leads Into Ignorance" in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*?

— But this article was signed by the engineers Gubarev and Rostarchuk, not by government officials,—the audience reacted.

— Yes, that's true. But, don't you know how such articles are written in our country?

After that, in response to the audience's request, this man mounted the rostrum and stated his objections to the hypothesis under discussion. He turned out to be the lecturer of the Moscow Planetarium, I. F. Shevlyakov. In fact, he merely repeated all the arguments against the paleocontact hypothesis previously published in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

I. S. Shklovsky questioned Shevlyakov why he,

severely condemning Agrest's hypothesis, was at the same time not rejecting in his lectures at the Planetarium Giordano Bruno's theory of the plurality of the worlds. Shevlyakov answered without any embarrassment:

— But Giordano Bruno never asserted that ET cosmonauts had ever visited the Earth![2]

In the process of the discussion the negative attitude to the idea of paleocontacts advocated by I. F. Shevlyakov was persuasively criticized. After that, Shevlyakov and some other colleagues of his decided to organize a series of lectures in Moscow Planetarium to denounce "Agrest's antiscientific hypothesis". Posters placed everywhere in Moscow informed Muscovites about the lectures that would take place in the lecture hall of the Planetarium between December 6th and 13th, 1960. (At the beginning of December I was in Moscow and saw these posters myself. To tell the truth, it was rather unpleasant.) Many people wished to attend the lectures and all the tickets were sold out in advance. However, before the first lecture was to take place it was ordered to cancel all of them.

At the booking office of the Planetarium there was a large crowd of people asking for their money back. Naturally, their demands had to be satisfied. The Planetarium suffered losses, since some money had been spent on preparations for the lectures. The cancellation order had been given by a very influential office.

Being not too satisfied with the successes they had achieved, the opponents of the paleocontact hypothesis decided to redouble their efforts. The scientific section of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* organized a public debate on this subject matter in the Central House of Journalists. A great number of distinguished scientists took part in the debate. The position of *KP* was sharply criticized. In particular, Dr. I. S. Shklovsky told about my lecture in the Sternberg State Astronomical Institute. Professor D. A. Frank-Kamenetsky demanded that the editorial board of *KP* "should bring apologies to the honest Soviet scientist Agrest". The head of the science section of *KP* answered that he might write a letter to Agrest, but he would never publish it in the newspaper. The reaction of the audience was unanimous: "Shame!"

However strange it may seem now, an account of the public debate was never published in the press. Only one of the leading Soviet journalists of the time—Georgiy Ostroumov—mentioned it in his article "Thoughts Outrunning the Facts" published (in February 1961) in *Nedelya*—a weekly supplement to the all-Union newspaper *Izvestiya.* In this article Ostroumov defended the right to put forward far-reaching hypotheses and opposed the malicious attacks against the present author and Alexander Kazantsev—a well-known Soviet writer and engineer who supposed that the Tunguska meteorite had in fact been an alien spaceship.

As for the further development of my idea about paleocontacts, I have to admit that it proved impossible to publish my whole work in any scientific journal. The article was published in full only in the annual *Na Sushe i na More* (On Land and at Sea) in 1961 under the title "The Cosmonauts of Yore". Alexander Kazantsev played a great role in its publication. This article was reprinted many times both in the USSR and abroad.

Although several collections of scholarly papers devoted to the problem of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) were published in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and later, none of my articles was ever included in them. The reason for it was officially explained to me by the Chief Editor of two SETI collections, Dr. V. S. Troitsky, in his letter of October 19, 1986 as follows: "The problem of paleocontacts has not been accepted up till now by public opinion as a scientific problem, being traditionally interpreted as an attempt to restore religious belief. This was the main difficulty in selecting the articles for both collections." The essence of the so-called "public opinion" in the Soviet Union is well known not only to the Soviet citizens. The so-called "public opinion" in the former USSR stopped the development of the paleocontact hypothesis that had originated in this country. In fact, the hypothesis was not accepted by orthodox scientists, who made impossible its further development in the framework of science.

Notes and References

[1] Supposing that the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by an atomic explosion it is possible to rationally interpret the following text from Genesis (19:26): "Lot's wife looked back and she thereupon turned into a pillar of salt." (JPS, Philadelphia–New York, 1988, p. 28.) Probably, when standing near a pillar of salt Lot's wife was burned by the light flash of the atomic explosion, but her shadow remained on the pillar of salt, like those of some victims of the atomic bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. For more details of experimental investigation in the Dead Sea region, see my article "Experimental Proof of the Paleocontact Hypothesis" in *Ancient Skies*, 1995, Vol. 21, No. 6.

[2] In my article "Paleocontact Ideas in the Middle Ages" published in *Ancient Skies*, 1995, Vol. 21, No. 5, it is shown that three hundred years before Giordano Bruno the great mediaeval scholar Ramban (1194–1270) had encrypted the paleocontact idea in his commentary to the verse Genesis 6:4. This idea was then even more dangerous for the then ruling ideology than in the time of Giordano Bruno, who was burnt at the stake for his idea of the plurality of civilizations in the Universe. But Ramban was not afraid to think and his great experience as an ideological fighter showed him how to save this idea for the coming generations.

SEARCH FOR PALEOVISIT TRACES: GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND SOME PROBLEMS

Yuriy N. Morozov

1. Introduction

What is to be sought for, where and how? Undoubtedly, these are currently the key questions of paleovisitology.

A paleovisit (PV) is a temporary presence of an extraterrestrial civilization (or, more likely, a detached part of it, an "expedition") on the Earth in the past. The only source of information on a PV can be its traces, i.e. any objects on the Earth that are somehow associated by origin with the PV and thus contain some information on it.

There are two possible types of paleovisit traces:

(A) *direct traces*, i.e. material remains of an extraterrestrial (ET) expedition—remains of extraterrestrials, their equipment, "memorial signs", "message bags", etc., and

(B) *indirect traces*, i.e. any alteration of a terrestrial object that appeared as a result of a paleovisit. These could be observed at various levels:

— *physical and chemical* (e.g. technogeneous traces of abnormally high radioactivity),

— *biological* (e.g. traces of genetic manipulations in terrestrial organisms, including man),

— *mental* (memories of an ET expedition contained in oral or written texts, as well as in representations (ancient images); knowledge borrowed from extraterrestrials and embodied in the terrestrial culture).

Generally, a PV investigation should include stages of selection, reconstruction and identification.

It is natural to search for PV traces in the continually enriched treasure house of historical sources (in the broadest sense of the word): archaeological finds, ancient texts, pictures, etc. Thus, we must, using certain preliminary (if not intuitive) criteria, separate the sources that can prove to be PV traces. Then, by analyzing each source, the object of the past that is reflected in the source should be reconstructed by historical (archaeological, ethnologic, etc.) methods. After this, it "only" remains to ascertain that the reconstructed object is really related to a paleovisit, as it was first assumed. Such an identification is to be realized by comparing the object with the theoretical model of the expected features of an ET expedition (let's call it ET-model) and with the knowledge about terrestrial objects of the past having similar appearance (T-model).

This is certainly only a general scheme. Everything will prove much more complicated in reality. Analysis of the first attempts to comprehend scientifically the paleovisit problem, as well as scientific criticism of the "ancient astronaut theory", show us that when trying to look for PV traces we are faced with many difficult problems.

2. What Type of Traces Can Be Convincing?

It is not always possible to ascertain what real facts are reflected (if at all) in myths, legends, or rock drawings, etc. with the reliability required for paleovisitology. As a rule, interpretation of such sources is ambiguous, with two or more equally likely versions.

It was understanding of these difficulties that led Carl Sagan to the conclusion: "A completely convincing demonstration of past contact with an extraterrestrial civilization may never be provided on textual and iconographic grounds alone" [8, p. 497]. Sagan's idea is that only the finding of an extraterrestrial artifact will be absolutely convincing. It is supported by F. D. Drake: "It appears that there is absolutely no choice in this matter but <...> to require material evidence of clearly non-terrestrial origin. <...> Thus we establish the criterion that an undeniable artifact is a necessary and sufficient condition to prove a direct contact." [5, p. 344]

Although obviously reasonable, this opinion is not free of restriction. First, the above-cited concept could not provide the basis for effective research. It is unclear how we should search for an "undeniably non-terrestrial artifact", what properties it should have to distinguish it from terrestrial artifacts, etc. It was not without reason that Drake observed that a special search for such an artifact would be inefficient, and it remained only to hope that it would be found by pure chance.

Second, such direct traces are indeed the most evident and the most desirable, but hardly inevitable traces of a paleovisit. Extraterrestrials could, but were not obliged, to leave deliberate signs of their presence. It is not reasonable for us to expect an ET expedition to have necessarily left accidental traces, e.g. pieces of equipment, lost or spoilt. (The fact that our manned or unmanned flights to other planets always leave there abandoned hardware seems to be nothing but evidence of the comparatively low level of our technology.) Finally, if some material traces did remain after an ET visit, they may well have been destroyed.

Since we do not know what kind of conceivable traces of a supposed paleovisit have really survived, we have only one way to follow: study the whole possible range of traces, improving the methods of information acquisition from textual and iconographic sources (which incidentally would be beneficial to the disciplines dealing with them) and also trying to provide mutual

complementation and cross checking of sources of various types. It seems also that we can expect comprehensive study of indirect traces to result finally in finding the decisive, direct traces, that is, an ET artifact (cf. [6, p. 97]).

3. Deceptive Similarities

There is up to date no justified and efficient ET concept. However, it is easy to formulate the general model of what we are after. We are to find, in historical sources, true information of (1) intelligent beings of (2) ET origin; the latter attribute can be suggested by reports that

(a) the beings came to the earth from space, and/or

(b) they were biologically distinct from terrestrials, and/or

(c) they had knowledge and practical abilities that essentially exceeded those of the terrestrial culture of the time.

If we use, however, this model for practical search, we shall soon see a surplus of false PV traces. Almost every mythology or religion mentions communication between "sky dwellers" and inhabitants of the Earth, or nonhuman but intelligent beings having supernatural power... The initial model is therefore too abstract to be efficient.

How shall we develop a more specific ET-model? For the present we can only do it by analogy with our civilization. For example, the technology of a visiting ET civilization is supposed to obey the laws of physics, mechanics, etc. that we know, and also the equipment of the space visitors should be adapted to terrestrial conditions (e.g. flying vehicles should be designed according to aerodynamics). Hence, it seems reasonable enough that ET facilities should be generally similar to ours. However, as experience has told us more than once, there lies on this way a number of potential traps.

Let's consider as an illustration a myth of Australian aborigines that was published by Katrine Langloh Parker about a hundred years ago. The myth concerns the origin of the Southern Cross constellation.

"In the very beginning" of time the heavenly lord created two men and one woman, and taught them to feed on plants. When drought came, the first people began to starve. One of the men killed an opossum. He and the woman started eating the animal's meat, whereas the second man, despite all attempts to persuade him, did not touch the unusual food, even though he was starving. Having quarrelled with the rest of the group, he "went in the direction of sunset". His companions soon finished their meal and followed him.

"When approaching the edge of a valley, they saw the man on another side of the valley, by a river. They shouted, asking him to stop, but he did not pay any attention on them and went further until he approached a large white eucalyptus. There he fell on the ground as if dead and the people saw near him a black creature with enormous fiery eyes. The creature lifted the dead man up into the tree and threw him into a hollow.

Running fast through the valley, the people heard such a loud thunderclap that, being astonished, they fell down to the ground. After rising to their feet, they saw in surprise the huge eucalyptus uprooted and rushing through the air southward. They noticed fiery eyes shining from the tree...

At last, the tree stopped near Warrambula, or the Milky Way, that leads to the abode of sky gods. Little by little, the tree passed out of sight, and only the four fiery eyes were still being seen by the people. Two of these were the eyes of Yovi, the spirit of death, and two other ones were those of the first dead man." Langloh Parker adds: "For the tribes of this part of the country the Southern Cross is still known as Yaraan-du—the place of the white eucalyptus..." [7, p. 33–34; back translation from the Russian]

It is possible to imagine the situation: three people are walking through an unpopulated region and suddenly they see at a distance something light-colored and tall, standing upright. Could the Australian aborigines have found a better description for a rocket standing on its launch pad than a "big white eucalyptus"? The color is here of importance as well: a rocket hull is usually covered (for heat insulation) by white paint. One of the Australians, having approached the launch pad, loses consciousness (due to hunger, or fear) and a crewman drags him via a hatch (a "hollow") into his spaceship. The rocket blasts off. Both the terrible rumble and the unbelievable vision of a *flying* tree (this simile is very apt indeed—especially as the tongues of flame from the rocket's nozzles looked like heavy tree roots) plunged the involuntary spectators into shock. Nevertheless, they noticed and then conveyed to their tribesmen one detail of the scene that is for us crucial: instead of the rocket that had vanished far away there lit up in the sky four luminous points that resembled the four bright stars of the Southern Cross constellation. This is exactly what was observed by witnesses of launchings of Russian space rockets *Vostok*, *Voskhod*, and *Soyuz*. The four "stars" are in fact the four engines of the first stage of the booster rocket (designed according to the so-called "batch" scheme) that separated from the main body, but had not yet completed their role.

As we can make sure, the contents of the myth about the "white eucalyptus" coincide with a real picture of a space rocket launch down to the smallest details. But let us examine the situation in some depth, supposing the story does reflect a real event. This myth was known as far back as the beginning of the 20th century and therefore it would have been absurd to see in it an echo of

blast-offs of terrestrial rockets and spacecraft. But the "extraterrestrial" variant does not hold water either. Could an ET expedition use a booster rocket built according to the "batch" scheme? This scheme, being defensible at the current stage of the progress of cosmonautics, would certainly prove to be much too primitive for the level of technology of a civilization that practices interstellar flights. Thus, we are to admit that the main detail seeming to be the best evidence of the "rocket nature" of the "eucalyptus" (the motif of the "four stars") is in fact a result of pure coincidence. Therefore, other parallels are also coincidental. It would probably be not devoid of interest to discuss possible meanings of the same details of the story in the light of comparative mythology (for example, the "eucalyptus" is an obvious variant of the "world tree" by which mythological personages of various peoples are climbing to the heavens), but we will limit ourselves with the most essential conclusion: the above-cited Australian text cannot be regarded as evidence of an extraterrestrial visit.

Such cases are fairly typical. Proponents of the "ancient astronaut theory" found ancient representations of "sputniks", "astronauts in spacesuits and helmets with antennas", "lunar vehicles", "lunar modules" (like the lunar module of *Apollo*), "tanks", "pistols", "walkie-talkies", etc. However just the "striking similarity" in each such case makes us regard the analogy as misleading, because only a civilization that was far ahead of terrestrial civilization would be capable of an interstellar flight to visit the Earth. Proceeding from this obvious argument, the following criterion was formulated as far back as the 1960s: a discovery of ancient pictures or descriptions of objects looking similar to space machinery or other technical objects of our civilization of today "testifies, however paradoxically it may sound, against the idea of space visitors and requires a different explanation" [2, p. 6].

This criterion is lacking, however, in any "quantitative" certainty. Indeed, all serious researchers agree in that we may not expect any "excessive" likeness between a sought-for extraterrestrial and the modern Earth technologies, but what measure is to be applied to lay the boundary beyond which the similarity is "admissible"? All this remains unclear now. For example, C. Sagan maintained that space visitors could not have employed rockets, landing sites, or nuclear weaponry [9, p. 206]. This does not seem indisputable; however, arguments in such a dispute would be rather intuitive. This problem requires a serious theoretical elaboration.

4. How to Define a "True Anomaly"?

Identification is a difficult task not only because we have no concept of the sought-for objects. Also, it is not so easy to use the T-model, that is the body of knowledge of undoubtedly terrestrial objects of the past.

Search for PV traces should naturally be oriented towards everything that does not conform to its historical context. V. I. Avinsky formulated the following "technological criterion": "we should search in the past for "odd" elements of technology <...> that are obviously not proper to the historical epoch, that are, so to say, several orders higher than the level of the terrestrial technology of the time" [3, p. 21]. This author added later the "information criterion", namely: we should select cultural phenomena containing "exceedingly complex information, featured by a level of knowledge unexpectedly high for the epoch in question and not rooted in it" [4, p. 21]. But it is easy to see that both criteria are in fact particular, compared with the general criterion of an "alien character" of an object from the past with respect to the terrestrial culture.

The difficulty of practical application of this criterion stems from the fact that our knowledge of the Earth's past is an evolving system. Not infrequently, new finds or discoveries (like the "Baghdad electric batteries" or the "calculating machine" of Antikythera, the "deciphering" of Stonehenge by G. Hawkins and other achievements of archaeoastronomy, etc.) essentially contribute to our awareness of the past knowledge and abilities of man. And what at first seemed "anomalous", "historically illegitimate" later finds its place in a more accurate picture of human history.

As suggested by experience, it is rather illusory to hope to find cultural and historical phenomena, whose anomalous character (suggesting their extraterrestrial origin) would be quite "evident", "indisputable" and obvious to everybody. Extraterrestrial origin could not be ascertained without a thorough direct study of the object in its relationship to the historical context and its analysis in comparison with other typologically similar objects. It seems that the anomalous character will be proved, if it appears impossible to trace a continuous evolution from undoubtedly terrestrial objects to that under study, or to find its reasonable place in a typological series of undoubtedly terrestrial objects.

5. The Resulting Logical Pattern

The positive results of our consideration lead to the following pattern of analysis of a suspected PV trace (see Fig. 1, on page 12).

Here *S* is the historical source, *O* the object of the past, *ET* and *T* the ET-model and T-model respectively. The pattern represents the *logic* of the study, it does *not* prescribe the sequence of operations (which can vary according to the particular situation), but suggests the main rules of analysis.

The *S–>O* operation consists in reconstruction of the object of the past using the data from an ex-

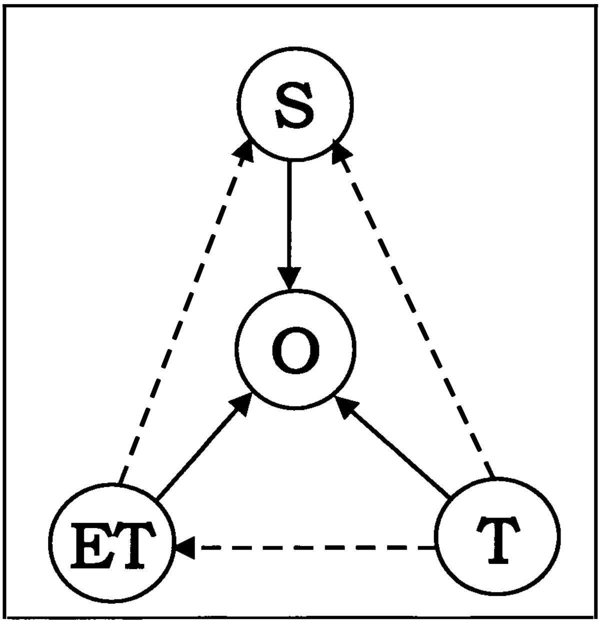


Fig. 1

tant source. It also expresses an important requirement: identification is to be done of an object *restored to its original state*, that is cleared of all distortions of information it contains. When identifying the reconstructed object, we must compare it *both* with T and ET models. A proof of a paleovisit can only be an object that shows "sufficient" conformance with the ET-model (*ET->O*), and simultaneously "sufficient" nonconformance with the T-model (*T->O*). Similarity of the object to the expected features of an ET expedition will only be convincing provided that there are no similar features in the Earth society of the time. And vice versa, it could not be a proof of a paleovisit, if the object of the past is "mysterious", "anomalous", but we are not sure that these anomalous features naturally fit into the framework of an ET expedition.

The other operations are auxiliary and optional. We have mentioned that it is in principle possible to build a concept of certain features of an ET expedition by proceeding from existing features of today's terrestrial civilization, and extrapolating their anticipated course of development to the future (*T->ET*). As regards the *ET->S* and *T->S* operations, the following is to be taken into consideration. Ideally, the procedure of reconstruction of an object of the past (*S->O*) requires a method based on knowledge of information encoding and storage in the given type of sources but independent of premature hypotheses on the object's nature, so that the result would not be artificially fitted to our desire. And it is only after such "unbiased" reconstruction of the object that its rigorous identification would be warranted.

However, this is an abstract and often positively unrealistic pattern. Even the selection of candidate sources is based on hypotheses on the nature of the objects of the past which they may have reflected and which are not yet formally reconstructed. Besides, processes of reflection of the reality in historical sources are so intricate, that researchers often choose a simpler way—namely, they transfer to the source data their knowledge of objects which could have been reflected in it and, if these data correspond with some model or other, they assume the identification to be completed, ascribing all the unfitting features to distortion in reflection, subsequent alterations of the source information, etc. Such a technique is methodologically imperfect, though in some cases it may prove inevitable.

The described pattern represents certainly the simplest case. In practice, the required operations may be much more complex (for instance, when analyzing a *system* of traces). And besides, each of the above operations involves overcoming of particular problems. Some of these problems may find a solution when dealing with specific facts, but more general studies are also needed. As pointed out by M. M. Agrest, one of the pioneers of paleovisitology, the search for and study of PV traces "will require development of special methods and invention of new means of analysis that will be doubtless valuable in themselves" [1, p. 540].

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RB QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Dr. Yuriy N. Morozov

From the Editor: Dr. **Yuriy Morozov** is a professional folklorist, being a graduate of the philological faculty of Moscow University, where he also defended his Ph.D. thesis on the historicity of folklore. He has been engaged in paleovisitological studies since the late 1960s.

Dr. Morozov is the author of many publications on the problem of paleovisits in scholarly and popular-science periodicals. He is a member of the RIAP Scientific Council.

1. Dr. Morozov, what is, in your opinion, contemporary anomalistics? What are its main tasks?

It is impossible to answer these questions without posing another question, a more general and difficult one: does anomalistics exist at all? Yes, there is a multitude of investigations of so-called anomalous (at bottom of fact—not recognized by science) phenomena. But do these investigations form a unified cognitive system? Do the ufologists and parapsychologists, cryptozoologists and "ghost hunters" realize that taken together, they belong to the "invisible college" of anomalists? And what unites them (if at all), apart from an awareness that, in their various ways, they are pursuing investigations in fields "forbidden" from the standpoint of official science?

I will not venture to propose quite definite answers to these questions. Nevertheless, it seems to me that a considerable part of formally dissimilar anomalous phenomena have some common feature that stimulate the researchers to cooperate. I would define this feature as follows: "elusive reality". It is well known that people possessing paranormal abilities not infrequently turn out incapable of displaying these in the presence of skeptical investigators; poltergeists refuse to "rage" before video cameras; the only evidence of "alien abductions" is word of mouth; Nessie still remains a legend; the "abominable snowman" has never been caught. In essence, classical science has a certain reason when it refuses to consider these subjects. Scientists are accustomed to "normal" phenomena of the physical world that may be instrumentally recorded and reproduced under given conditions. That is why they simply cannot recognize the existence of phenomena that are not so "yielding" to researchers.

From this follows the main distinctive feature of the research method of anomalistics: it is noticeably more trusting as regards the phenomena under investigation than is science. Such statements as "this is inconceivable", "incredible", "impossible" are heard in anomalistics much more rarely than in "normal" science; and criteria of "the possible" are here far more liberal. As a matter of fact, the very first task of anomalistics is quite simple: to describe anomalous phenomena as scrupulously as possible and to obtain the maximum information about them—not trying at this stage to guess whether or not these phenomena are physically real. This "predestination"—to serve first of all as a store of "anomalous" information—is typical for very different research directions, being therefore an additional incentive for their consolidation.

Yet the utterly contradictory status of modern anomalistics is due to the same peculiar properties of this field. It may seem natural to believe that the main task of anomalistics is the scientific study and interpretation of anomalous phenomena. But scientific study of the world begins with the separation of fact from fiction, the objective from the subjective. As was noted above, criteria developed in classical science do not allow anomalous phenomena to be considered as facts. As for anomalistics itself, it has not developed as yet its own strict criteria that would permit the differentiation of fact from fiction in the set of empirical data it uses.

In the light of the above-said one should not be surprised when seeing that at present practically in any branch of anomalistics the majority of investigations are of parascientific, rather than scientific, character. One can hope, nevertheless, that students of anomalous phenomena who are well grounded in science will with time develop a scientific component of anomalistics, being guided not so much by the paradigms of real science as by the general scientific ideal of objective cognition of the world. It is not improbable that one day in the future anomalistics will grow into "nonclassical" science. However, one should not expect this will happen soon.

2. How could you formulate the contents of the problem of paleovisits? Is this problem scientific, in your opinion?

Under paleovisits are meant hypothetical visitations to our planet in the distant historical and geological past by extraterrestrial intelligent beings. Modern science admits or, let's say more carefully, does not rule out the possibility of such visits from space. Therefore, the question as to whether or not this possibility did in fact materialize is totally scientific. To date, it is this very question that constitutes the main contents of the paleovisit problem. In research practice we are dealing, however, with a number of individual mini-problems: can this or that fact of history be considered as evidence of a paleovisit? When trying to solve these particular problems, more general methodological problems arise. It turns out that we understand only poorly how traces of a paleovisit might look, and neither can we select them with a fair degree of confidence from the background of other relics of the past. Thus, the paleovisit problem is, as a matter of fact, a complex of problems at various levels.

3. What, in your opinion, could be considered as the solution of the paleovisit problem? What is needed to be done (both on theoretical and organizational levels) to reach such a solution?

It was long ago that the necessary and sufficient conditions for solving the problem of paleovisits were defined. It is believed that for its *positive* solution ("a paleovisit did occur") it would be quite enough to find one convincing trace of a space visit to the Earth—say, one "indubitably extraterrestrial" artifact. To obtain the *negative* solution ("our planet has never been visited by extraterrestrials") as strictly as the positive one would be hardly possible. Even if no indubitable paleovisit evidence is known at present, it does not mean such evidence will not be discovered one day in the future. However, as was rightly noticed by Dr. J. Fiebag, "if in the course of a sufficiently long period of time (say, a hundred years), despite a most intensive search that meets all scientific criteria, there is found no definite [paleovisit] evidence, the [paleovisit] hypothesis will have to be rejected with a good degree of certainty as a non-verifiable and therefore false one".

Thus, to reach the positive or negative solution of the paleovisit problem, "intensive studies meeting all scientific criteria" are necessary. To conduct such studies, we need, in turn, some number of people who: a) would recognize the problem as a real one and would feel a personal research interest to it; b) would be scientifically trained and (which is *very* desirable) would have a certain degree of authority in the field of science that "delegated" them; c) would study the paleovisit problem mainly in those aspects of it (archaeological, geological, ethnological, etc.) that correspond to their speciality in science. In the process of paleovisitological work of these researchers there would inevitably appear the need to establish regular information channels between them, as well as, probably, to form a special organizational structure.

Unfortunately, this is not happening today. The recent unsuccessful attempts to create a scientific research committee on the paleovisit problem and to launch a journal on paleovisitology have clearly demonstrated that all projects of such a kind are doomed until there appears a sufficient number of people really interested in their fulfillment. Thus, the virtual lack of a research community engaged in scientific studies of the paleovisit subject matter seems to me the main current problem of this field of investigations.

4. What is, in your opinicn, the modern state of the paleovisit problem in the countries of the former USSR and in the West? What are the main achievements of the last 40 years? What are the main shortcomings of present-day paleovisitological studies?

The paleovisit problem in the countries of the former Soviet Union is in a sorry plight. It is worthy of reminding that it was in the USSR that the paleovisit idea was for the first time formulated (by Dr. Matest Agrest in the years 1959–1960) as a scientific problem. Discussion around this question in Soviet mass-media in the 1960s was fairly productive, and starting in the early 1970s, Soviet researchers succeeded in extending this discussion to the pages of the scientific press, as well as in putting it on the agendas of some scholarly meetings, international ones included. Nowadays the development of the Russian school of paleovisitology has almost stopped. The authors of innumerable publications on the paleovisit subject matter in the modern Russian press reap where they have not sown, rehashing either old journal papers of Soviet times, or publications of foreign authors (thereby more often than not descending to open plagiarism). The few "original" hypotheses amount to attempts for the hundredth time to reveal "extraterrestrial wisdom" allegedly encoded in the dimensions of the Egyptian pyramids or in the structure of Stonehenge. All this does not seem to be worthy of any serious consideration. I pin my hopes for the progress of scientific paleovisitology in the CIS countries only on RIAP—even though, let's self-critically admit, our activities in this sphere have up to this time been not so fruitful.

In general, the current situation regarding paleovisitological studies differs considerably depending on the language area. In the English-speaking countries, first of all in the USA, this problem has been "dissolved" in the UFO subject matter, attracting a relatively weak interest on the part of the research community; it is only the series of books "The Earth Chronicles", by Z. Sitchin, that can be regarded as a considerable contribution to paleovisitology. The French school of paleovisitology that showed its worth in the 1960s–1970s has in fact today ceased its existence. On the other hand, in the German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) there has occurred in the last decade a real outburst of activity in this field of investigations. It is worth emphasizing that inside this community one can see a rising tendency to bring paleovisitological studies up to a true scientific level.

The main positive result of the forty-year discussions of the problem may be formulated as follows: there was conducted an initial search for possible paleovisit traces and their initial examination. There is, however, a negative result as well. It is due to the fact that the search and the examination have been conducted by quite different people. The former are sincerely keen on the paleovisit subject matter, but as a rule they possess neither the knowledge nor the experience of professional scholars. The majority of the latter, on the contrary, are professional scholars, but they perceive the paleovisit idea only as an annoying extraneous irritant, as a fallacy contradicting their own views on the history of the Earth.

Still worse is that in the argument between the former and the latter each of the sides has been appealing not so much to their opponents as to the "man in the street", who, being the principal consumer of books and films about "visitors from space", has become a sort of arbiter weighing all the pros and cons. The inevitable consequence of this orientation of the debate has been the oversimplification of complicated questions and the prevalence of *ad hominem* arguments.

5. What is the real role of "big science" in paleovisitological studies? What are the prospects of its participation in these studies?

It is interesting to trace the evolution of the attitude to this problem of such a prominent scientist as the late Dr. Carl Sagan. At the beginning of the 1960s he gave good grounds for the possibility of multiple paleovisits and paleocontacts in the history of our planet, formulated criteria of selection that would make it possible to single out information about such events in folklore of terrestrial peoples, and even pointed out a possible paleocontact myth — the Babylonian tradition of strange beings that helped the formation of the Sumerian civilization. Yet, some time later, Carl Sagan came to the conclusion that testimonies of such a kind cannot be considered as convincing proofs of a paleovisit. Concurrently, he became an active critic of the theories of Erich von Daeniken, whose "proofs" were, in his opinion, still less convincing. As a result, in the book *The Dragons of Eden* (1977), Sagan placed "belief in ancient astronauts" among other ridiculous doctrines, bracketing it with astrology, spiritism, and the hollow earth theory.

This individual example does, however, characterize the overall situation in the best way possible. "Big science", having posed the paleovisit problem, very soon shrank back from further work on it, since it became clear that historical sources, due to their very nature, did not promise a swift and definite solution of the problem, being instead a fertile field for parascientific speculations. As a result, this scientific problem is at present developed mainly by non-scientists.

May the situation be altered and if yes, in which way? Dr. S. Greenwood once noticed: "Should the day come when money can be allotted to ancient astronaut studies, an impressive number of scientists will consider that such studies merit their attention." Most likely, this is the case. But I am afraid that the work conducted by such a group of scholars would have been for paleovisitology of the same modest importance as was for ufology the work of the Condon Committee or the thirteen-year-long state-directed UFO research in the former USSR. It is my conviction that serious progress in the study of such non-trivial problems is impossible if there is at the heart of the research no normal human curiosity...

That is why we have to rely at present only upon those separate representatives of the world of science who feel personal interest in one or another aspect of paleovisitology. If their names and/or the results of their work in this field prove to be weighty enough, their voices will be sooner or later heard by "big science" as well.

6. What is the role and what are the prospects of participation of anomalistics in the development of the paleovisit problem?

Basically, a paleovisit does not seem to me an "anomalous phenomenon". At least, not as yet. Who knows to what extent will manifestations of extraterrestrial intelligence appear anomalous to us when we discover them! Perhaps, then paleovisitology will need a close collaboration with ufology and other branches of anomalistics, first of all in the theoretico-methodological aspect.

Still, even now there exists some common ground for joint work of anomalists and paleovisitologists. For instance, a group of researchers is at present studying an anomalous zone in the north of Russia. Here there is a cluster of anomalous effects recorded visually and instrumentally, an extensive amount of folklore describing contacts with humanoids, as well as legends about paleocontacts with alien beings from the star system of Sirius. I have been lucky enough to participate in these studies. In the not-so-distant future, I hope to acquaint the readers of RIAP Bulletin with some of their preliminary results.

7. You have been studying the paleovisit problem for many years. Could you formulate your main conclusions about the reality (or unreality) of paleovisits in the history of our planet and their influence on the history of terrestrial civilization?

My answer will not be too original: the reality of paleovisits cannot be ruled out, but it has not been proved. Such was my opinion when in the late 1960s I devoted myself to a serious study of this question; at present it still remains the same. Over the last few decades, alleged paleovisit traces have turned out to be of purely terrestrial origin on more than one occasion. At the same time, there remain some unsolved mysteries as well — in particular, the astronomical lore of the Dogon, the Nazca lines, etc. I am greatly impressed by the work of Dr. A. Eenboom and his colleagues who experimentally proved that the ancient figurines of "gold airplanes" from Colombia dated to the 1st millennium AD are in fact models of fairly sophisticated aircraft.

On the basis of my own intuitive feelings as a paleovisitologist with many years' research experience (and not on purely rational considerations), I could admit that guests from outer space did make an impact upon certain terrestrial cultures. But this impact was limited and pursuing some research goals, rather than benevolent enlightening ones. As for the "space gurus" who for millennia led humanity along its thorny historical path, and then suddenly disappeared from the historical scene, I do not believe in those.

THE BIMINI ENIGMA

Talbot Shaw Lindström

In 1968 Florida newspapers carried reports of Eastern Airlines pilots (Trig Adams and Robert Brush) on various routes to the Caribbean which took them over the islands, reefs, and shoals comprising the westernmost portions of the Bahamas, seeing underwater wall-like formations at several points off-shore of these islands and extending almost as far south as Cuba. Indeed, a Canadian marine archaeological team has, according to Cuban press reports, currently been doing marine archaeological survey work on what are reported to be man-made looking subsurface features in Cuban coastal waters.

As a result of those reports, the author, at the time (Summer 1971) engaged in the survey of an early 19th century wreck of a British man-of-war on the Gulf side of Key Largo, drove to Miami to meet one of those pilots, Trig Adams, at his home in Miami to discuss what Adams had seen off the Bahamian island of North Bimini, since that was the closest island easily accessible by Chalk seaplane from Miami. As a result of those conversations, the author flew over to Bimini the same day and looked at the area from the land side and spoke with local residents about what they knew of the purported underwater formation.

As a result of this trip, the author joined Dr. John A. Gifford, marine geologist and archaeologist, of the University of Miami in November 1971 to do follow-up work on the marine geological survey he was making of the portion of the underwater formation off North Bimini which Eastern Airlines pilots Brush and Adams had brought to public attention. This formation, which became known in the popular media as the Bimini Roadway, was in the shape of an elongated "J" with the curved portion of the "J" facing towards the North Bimini shoreline. In fact, this formation had been originally photographed by the U.S. Army in an aerial survey conducted of the western coastline of the Bahamas in the 1940s after World War II.

While Dr. Manson Valentine, Ph.D., and Dimitri Rebikoff (co-developer of the Aqualung) had, after viewing and photographing the Bimini Roadway or "J", written articles asserting that it was of man-made origin because of its rectangular shaped blocks, the cores taken by Dr. John Gifford indicated that it was more likely a natural phenomenon which had occurred when the beach rock forming the "J" was exposed to tidal waters as part of a prior beach of Bimini several thousand years earlier (5,000 to 7,000 BC) when sea levels were lower. This was supported by the finding of modern beach rock on South Bimini which was also fracturing in rectangular blocks at the water's edge.

However, as the result of Dr. Gifford and the author being directed to several underwater groupings of column sections, both of fluted marble and of a very hard, but man-made material, on the sea bed off the South Point of North Bimini in two to three and more meters of water, it was decided that further marine archaeological survey work should be undertaken off North Bimini in 1972. Preliminary to this field work, Dr. Steve Proctor undertook a new aerial survey of the coastal waters of North Bimini.

This aerial survey showed what appeared to be two straight and parallel lines of rather large stones or boulders on the seabed north of Paradise Point and running from the present crescent shaped shoreline at a north to south diagonal toward three small rock reefs due west and seaward of Paradise Point. Several subsequent survey expeditions to the area established that this feature was indeed composed of two parallel lines of stones or boulders. The width of this feature was approximately three meters, with some of these stones or boulders being over a meter in height. Its length is close to one kilometer. Since this underwater formation is composed of individual boulders or stones, standing for the most part alone and upright on the seabed, it is difficult to find a natural explanation for its origin.

This underwater formation, now referenced as Proctor's Roadway to distinguish it from the Bimini Roadway, lies between the ancient shoreline of the "J" or Bimini Roadway and the current, crescent shaped shoreline north of Paradise Point. Very near to the three Crossing Rocks off Paradise Point, and between Proctor's Roadway and the curved part of the "J" of the Bimini Roadway, another underwater feature was discovered on the seabed. It is an amorphous humanoid figure composed of a heart shaped stone head, a three round stone "necklace" and a body, including arms and legs, made up of rectangular stones. It is four to five meters in length and approximately two meters in width at its shoulders. The vertical axis of this figure appears to be parallel to the vertical axis of Proctor's Roadway and at the same angle east of Magnetic North as Proctor's Roadway.

The above referenced underwater survey work was carried out by SEAS (Scientific Exploration and Archeology Society, Inc.) under the direction of the author during the period 1971–1997.

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